

# M Y S T E R Y

# H I N O S

# D O W N U N D E R

ARTICLE BY **JIM GIBSON**

▼ The KA Hino with a trailer following a B model Mack in August 1964.



Hino buses were first sold in Australia in 1965 – but its trucks didn't officially arrive here through accredited importer Thiess until 1971 – Jim Gibson investigates the mystery of a Hino heavy-duty specification truck being evaluated in Queensland during 1964.

The 1970s changed the face of our truck market in Australia with the entry of the four Japanese truck brands. Isuzu morphed from the Bedford, the Mitsubishi from the Dodge, UD was imported by Westco Motors and Hino established its marque through its arm's-length relationship with Toyota.

I spoke with Don McMillan Jr., whose parents Don and Gloria owned and operated Don McMillan Livestock Transport at Surat in Queensland. He says, "I was five-years-old at the time. But trucks were everything in my life. I well recall the Hino and dad's impressions of it, recounted numerous

times by him up until his passing in 1998.

"Don was well qualified to judge a truck's capabilities. He first built a livestock crate on an ex-military Blitz truck. He and Gloria started in Surat with a Fargo and a Lend-Lease Ford, progressing to a fleet of 14 Ford F600s – both semis, and truck and dogs, then Leylands, Inters, Dodges and onto B model Macks".

He went on to say, "This was the period when the late Cyril Anderson supplied the 1964 Hino truck. Haulmark Trailers built the body with a single deck cattle/two deck sheep crate at its Evans

Road factory in the Brisbane suburb of Salisbury. I remember that Don always highly praised the Hino truck – in his words, 'It was a big powerful truck for its time and could give the B model Macks a run for their money'."

He says the Hino evaluation truck with its Haulmark stock crate fitted, was in south-western Queensland between St George and Roma on the Carnarvon Highway at MacMillan's transport depot in Surat, during 1964, having been given to his father by Cyril Anderson to operate in his fleet – in order to report on its suitability, its performance Continued over...



▲ Hino and trailer loaded with sheep at Surat.



▲ Seen here at Surat in 1964 – Don MacMillan is in green overalls.



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Continued... and its ability to survive, in the harsh western Queensland outback environment and high ambient temperatures, while on duty loading and unloading livestock and transporting them with a 30ft (10m) dog-trailer in tow, over undulating terrain, along both bitumen and unmade bush tracks.

It was with the support of Hino Japan, that four Hino trucks were imported for durability evaluation purposes, as well as market acceptance. Cyril, a wily road transport businessman, knew that a Japanese truck invasion was inevitable and was keen to be at the frontier. The Japanese currency exchange rate in 1964 was ¥400 to A\$1.00 – this would have impacted the retail price considerably, thus making the Hino less expensive than its UK and US sourced contemporaries, whose currency exchange rates were not as competitive.

The 1960s and '70s currency exchange was a launching pad, by default, for the Japanese automotive industry, wishing to sell its products in Australia. Back then, due to the lower buying price of all Japanese products, we considered them to be cheap Japanese vehicles that wouldn't last – but we as consumers soon found that this was not the case at all – their products were durable.

As an example of currency exchange, the rate at the time of writing this article was ¥84 to our dollar, therefore, no more cheap Japanese sourced products.

A group of Japanese engineers had arrived with the trucks. As mentioned, one was fitted with a Haulmark stock crate for Don MacMillan to operate in



▲ Pictured in front of the Hino are Cyril Anderson and Don MacMillan with the Japanese engineers.



▲ At Surat with two dog trailers in tow in September 1964.

his livestock transport fleet – this is the red truck you see on these pages.

Of the other three trucks – two cab-overs (COEs) and one bonneted (normal control) – the details are somewhat sketchy, but it is believed the remaining two COEs ran in the Western Transport fleet, and the bonneted model was

taken on a demonstration dispo tour accompanied by the Japanese entourage to several other states.

As for John Cyril Anderson (1903-1983), he was without a doubt a legendary Queensland farmer. His Western Transport operation was based in Toowoomba and ran a fleet of brig

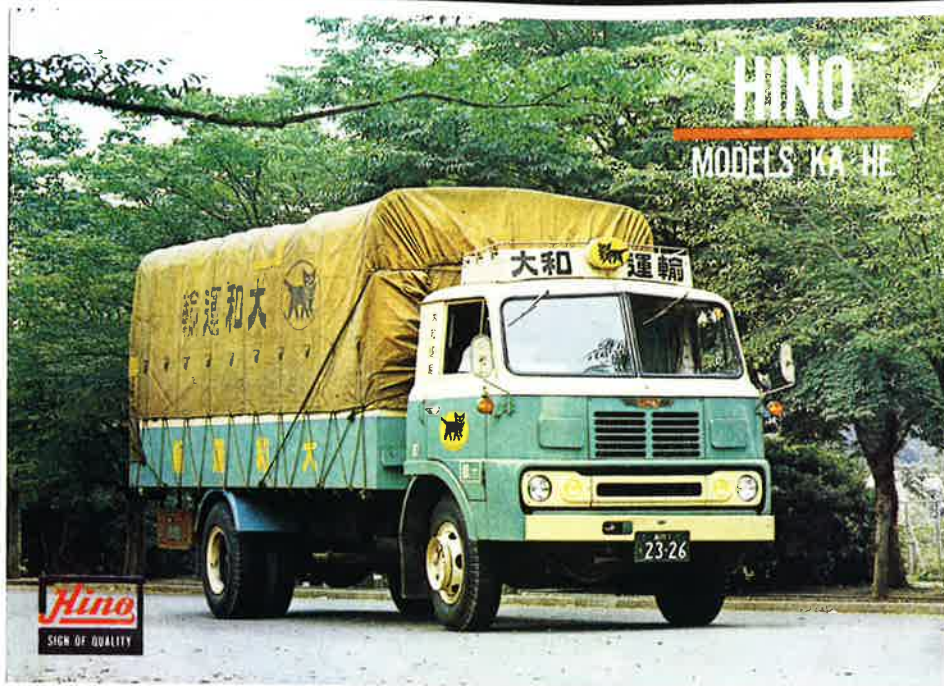


▲ Don MacMillan's Hino at Haulmark with a Japanese engineer.



▲ The Hino is loaded with a feed bin at Surat with one of MacMillan's Fords in the background.





▲ A Hino Japanese KA brochure – courtesy of Richard Stainer, a car and truck brochure collector in the UK.

yellow B model Macks (and later R models) pulling closed and spread bogie Haulmark trailers along the interstate black-top to all points of the compass within Australia. He'd also formed Westco Motors which became the importer of motor vehicles, Mack trucks being just one. He ran Mack Trucks Australia from 1963 and through the entire next decade. He also manufactured his own design Leader trucks during the '70s and '80s, which was a blend of North American and Australian components, engineered and built in Toowoomba.

#### GETTING A WORKOUT

Reading from an old spec sheet, Hino's mid-sixties KA heavy-duty model was powered by a 10-litre in-line six-cylinder diesel engine, offering 195hp@2,300rpm and 492lbs/ft torque@1,400rpm. The transmission was five-speed with constant mesh synchro on the top four. The rear axle was of two-speed variety with air shift actuation, thus giving a total of 10 forward ratios. Its GVM was 14,800kg and GCM 24,000kg.

Because of his young age at the time the Hino arrived at the depot,



▲ The Hino all-new 1950 TH10 model with a 7 litre engine and 8 tonne carrying capacity.

Don Jr. wasn't quite sure, but thought that Jimmy Albeck was chosen as the driver by his father, to work the Hino in the fleet. Don thought he still lived in the district, so we scoured the White Pages and bingo, there he was, living in Wallumbilla near Roma. He is now a septuagenarian, but remembered the truck well, and says he enjoyed the time he sat behind the wheel for some 80,000km during 1964/65.

Jimmy recalls, "Before I got the Hino I was driving an F600 and believe me it was chalk and cheese - the Hino was much quieter and very comfortable over rough terrain. It was great to sleep in, as you could stretch out, not like the Fords or the Macks. The tilt cab was also a bonus, giving better access to the engine bay for daily checks etc. It had 24-volt electrics and a compression engine brake – new to me.

"Don had said to me, don't spare the horses, give it a good workout and we'll see how well it can do the job. I drove it all over Queensland, and at times I'd even pull two trailers. I thought it was too high geared, so when I told the Japanese engineers my theory, they said no no, with a dubious look – I think they didn't quite understand what I was meaning about the fact that the lower gears were too tall."

He then carried on saying, "The only problem I had with it was the engine getting too hot, so I took it to Gary Walton, a 'gun' truck mechanic in Brisbane to see what he thought. He removed the oil-bath air cleaner, as he thought it was restricting air flow into the engine, then after doing some checks he replaced it with a Donaldson dry cartridge air-cleaner and Mack pre-cleaner – that fixed the overheating and gave it some extra grunt – it really went well after that mod. It would pull better than the Macks up hills, but they'd out run me on the flat. I remember pushing it up the Tollbar climb into Toowoomba once with 20-tonne of drums on board, it was in low 1st, Continued over...



▲ The original 1917 Hino model TGE A-Type.



# MYSTERY HINOS DOWN UNDER

Continued... but still holding the revs okay”.

Jimmy concluded by saying that he was sad to give the Hino back in early 1965. Once again information is a little sketchy with the passage of some five decades, but it is believed that Cyril was unable to make a satisfactory commercial alliance with the Japanese and therefore pulled-the-pin, and the truck was returned.

Don Jr. says, “Don and Gloria continued on to have an all Mack fleet, selling out to a Public Company in 1974”.

History reveals that Cyril’s company, Westco, became the importer of UD Nissan Diesel trucks and buses in 1972.

## ABOUT HINO MOTORS

The company traces its roots back to the founding of the Chiyoda Gas Company in 1910, which then merged with another company becoming the Tokyo Gas Company in 1912. Soon to broaden its product line including electronic parts, and renamed as Tokyo Gas and Electric Industry (TG&E). It produced its first motor vehicle in 1917, the Model TGE A-Type truck. In 1937, TG&E separated its automotive division calling it Tokyo Automobile Industry Co. Ltd. Four years later, the company changed its name to Diesel Motor Industry Co. Ltd., which would eventually become Isuzu Motors Limited (confusing isn’t it, but don’t worry it gets even more complicated!).

The following year in 1942, the new entity of Hino Heavy Industry Co. Ltd., was spun off from Diesel Motor Industry Co. Ltd., and the Hino name was born.

At the end of World War Two, the company stopped producing large diesel engines for marine applications, and with the signing of the treaty, the word Heavy was deleted from its company name. It then concentrated on the truck, bus and diesel engine markets, as Hino Industry Co. Ltd. The company took its name from the location of its headquarters in Hino City within the Tokyo prefecture (district).

To sharpen its marketing focus, in 1948, it added the name Diesel to become Hino Diesel Industry Co. Ltd. In 1950 the heavy-duty TH10 was introduced, and powered by the all-new 7 litre DS10 diesel engine. This



▲ The Hino Ranger KM was launched in Japan during 1964.

new 8 tonne truck, was considerably larger than existing Japanese trucks, which had rarely been built to carry more than a 6 tonne payload. The TC10 followed and was the first dual front axle configuration model.

In 1953, Hino entered the private car market, by manufacturing 750cc Renaults under licence from the French automobile company, then in 1961 it started building its own Contessa 900 sedan with an 893cc rear-mounted engine, and a pickup truck called the Hino Briska with the Contessa engine slightly enlarged and installed in the front, with rear-wheel-drive.

The Italian stylist Giovanni Michelotti (who was one of the most prolific designers of sports cars in the 20th

century – his notable designs were for Ferrari, Lancia, Maserati and the Triumph TR marques) redesigned the Contessa line in 1964, with a 1300cc rear-mounted engine, fuelled by twin SU-type carburettors. It developed 60hp (44kW) in the sedan model and 70hp (51kW) in the coupé version.

Hino ceased passenger car production in 1966 after forming an alliance with the Toyota group. Its Hamura factory then began full-time commercial vehicle production, with the manufacturing focus being entirely on truck and bus production – around the time the more modern styled Range KM model debuted.

In 1994, the new and current Hino logo was designed. In 1997, Hino



▲ The 1962 Hino Briska.



finished 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the truck class of the gruelling Paris to Dakar Rally, where its successes in this event have included eight successive victories in its class and 26 consecutive finishes. Reinforcing the products durability.

By 2009 the cumulative production of trucks and buses reached 3 million units. Last year marked Hino's 75th anniversary (1942 to 2017).

### HINO TRUCKS IN AUSTRALIA

The Thiess Group imported Hino trucks into Australia during 1971. They'd had great success with the Toyota light commercial product in our country since the 1950s, when they were used during the construction of the Snowy Mountains Scheme, which may have been a consideration when making the decision to sell the Hino product here.

In that first year, 76 trucks were sold, with total sales reaching 5,000 in its first 10 years.

Hinos came in as CBU (Completely Built Up) units and were distributed from the Sydney suburb of Rosebery – later moving to a then new facility at Taren Point on the edge of Botany Bay. It was envisaged that this location could give direct access to a wharf, if a port were to be constructed - that of course, didn't eventuate.

Then during the '80s an assembly operation was set up at Taren Point for SKD (Sectionally Knocked Down) production, from where the product was sold by various distributors in different states of Australia.

Hino Motor Sales Australia (HMSA) was formed and run as an independent operation in 1995 on a newly constructed site in Parraweena Road at Caringbah.

Today Hino is positioned as the second largest selling truck in the overall truck market in Australia, with 4,405 units sold – giving it a 16 per cent share in the calendar year 2016 – in a market segment totalling 30 manufacturers (source: Transport Industry Council (TIC) report December 2016). \*Jim Gibson



▲ The HH340 evaluation prime mover in TNT colours in 1975.



▲ The medium-duty Hino in the TNT fleet.

### HINO HH340

Fellow VTCM scribe and passionate truck historian Darren Hingston is compiling information on the history of TNT in order to write a book on the subject. In doing so he tracked down a 1975 Hino HH340 6x4 prime mover that, according to the HMSA archives, is one of six evaluation trucks that came to Australia during that year. One was given to TNT for use in its fleet as it was interested to evaluate the heavy-duty Hino product, because it had run several medium-duty Hinos in its local distribution fleet with great success.

Darren was told that a TNT driver had collected the designated TNT demo directly from Hino (possibly Thiess in Sydney).

He was also informed that a passing truck driver had seen a dilapidated old Hino sitting in a paddock on the NSW South Coast – could it be that very truck? As it wasn't too far from where I live, I got the details from Darren and went with camera-in-hand to investigate. HMSA had indicated that they may be interested in restoring the old girl.

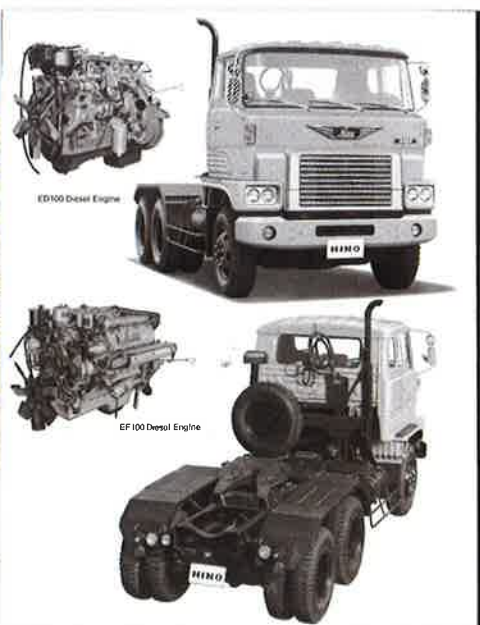
It was an HH340 alright, and as you can see from the photos it's a basket case well beyond redemption. After I sent the photos to Darren he replied with the following, "Wow, great summer ventilation, I've heard of 2x90 air-con before but I think this would beat it. A couple of interesting points from my side of things...This is the truck that I was told had been winching boats out of the water...I guess that explains the rust issues...The bullbar looks very much like that used by TNT, that along with the Roadranger selector I see hanging from the gear stick".

If you look at my front-on photo and compare it with the TNT Hino, the bullbar does look the same. As for it being used in later life for winching boats out of the water, that makes sense – as the chassis is fitted with a large winch and the turntable is setup for a low loader. Also note the yellow light on the cab roof that would have been used for over-dimensional loads. It was impossible for me to find the chassis number.



▲ The 1975 HH340 found on the NSW South Coast.

◀ Under the cab of the HH340 is its V8 13.8 litre 270hp diesel engine – RIP.



▲ The HH340 brochure.

